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The Honorable Hilary Clinton  
United States Senate  
476 Senate Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Clinton:

On behalf of more than 3 million volunteers and 1400 staff members of the March of Dimes, I am writing to thank you for introducing the "Screening for Health of Infants and Newborns (SHINE) Act." If enacted, this legislation would authorize grant programs to assist states in expanding the number of conditions screened for at birth and improve the dissemination of educational resources to the public and healthcare providers.

As you know, disparities among states in health screening at birth mean too many babies with serious birth defects are not being diagnosed and treated in time to avoid long term disability or even death. The March of Dimes has endorsed the recommendation of the American College of Medical Genetics that calls for every baby born in the United States to be screened for twenty-nine disorders, including certain metabolic conditions and hearing deficiency. The July 2006 March of Dimes newborn screening report card made clear the need for additional state efforts to expand programs to screen for the full range of the twenty-nine disorders. Specifically, only 9 percent of the babies born in the United States were tested for all of the recommended conditions. The "SHINE Act" will enhance state's capacity to expand the number of screens and provide important newborn screening educational materials to families via the internet.

We at the March of Dimes are sincerely grateful for your efforts related to newborn screening and look forward to working with you, and others in Congress with an interest in newborn screening.

Sincerely,

Marina L. Weiss Ph.D.  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Government Affairs